

Washington D.C. - At a bi-partisan press conference today, Congressman Jim Costa strongly supported the continuation of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund. Also in attendance were Congressman Ted Poe (TX-02), Congresswoman Katherine Harris (FL-13), Mr. Tom Charron, the Executive Director of the National District Attorneys Association, Mr. Mark Lunsford, the father of Jessica Lunsford who was murdered in Florida, and 14 national victim rights groups. The President's budget proposes rescinding the money in the Victims of Crime Act Fund.

"Victims are here today with their heart and soul to ensure Congress does the right thing. I began my commitment to victims' rights years ago in the California state legislature by supporting programs that provide services and outreach to victims of crime. Ironically, these are the very programs that stand to lose funding if the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund is wiped out. We cannot allow that to happen. While in the California state legislature, I authored "Three Strikes, You're Out," which is America's toughest standard against violent crime. In addition, we built prisons in California to put people away who do not obey the law," stated Costa.

"As we come out of National Crime Victims' Rights week, It is crucial to remember the needs and victims and the resources we can provide for them. The Victims of Crime Act Fund provides many vital services to victims and their families. Rescinding the money in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund would severely hurt crime victims' programs and many non-profit organizations that provide victims' services would struggle to exist," said Costa.

"The Victims of Crime Act Fund is crucial to many communities and organizations that rely on it for victims' services and compensation. In the 20th district, many organizations receive money from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund. Kern, Kings and Fresno county probation departments all receive funding. In addition, rape crisis centers receive funding which assists them in providing services to rape survivors. The Marjorie Mason Center in Fresno uses the funding to help victims of domestic violence and Clinica Sierra Vista in Lamont receives funding which they use to provide health services to victims of crime. These groups serve as a great example of the diverse programs that receive funding. Whether it is to provide health care, counseling or cover funeral expenses, these resources are extremely helpful in serving local communities and reaching out to victims of crime and their families," stated Costa.

"Crime victims have suffered enough and it is important to remember how we can

improve their lives and their families' lives. The Victims of Crime Act Fund is a \$1.2 billion program that serves almost 4 million victims and their families every year. The Fund provides services for victims of homicide, drunk driving, identify theft, robbery and rape," stated Costa.

"I will continue to work on behalf of the families of victims to protect this funding," concluded Costa.

Congressman Costa is a co-chair of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus.

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